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Faculty of Horticulture

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The Style and Atmosphere of Floreasca Neighbourhood Parks from the 1950s to Present Day

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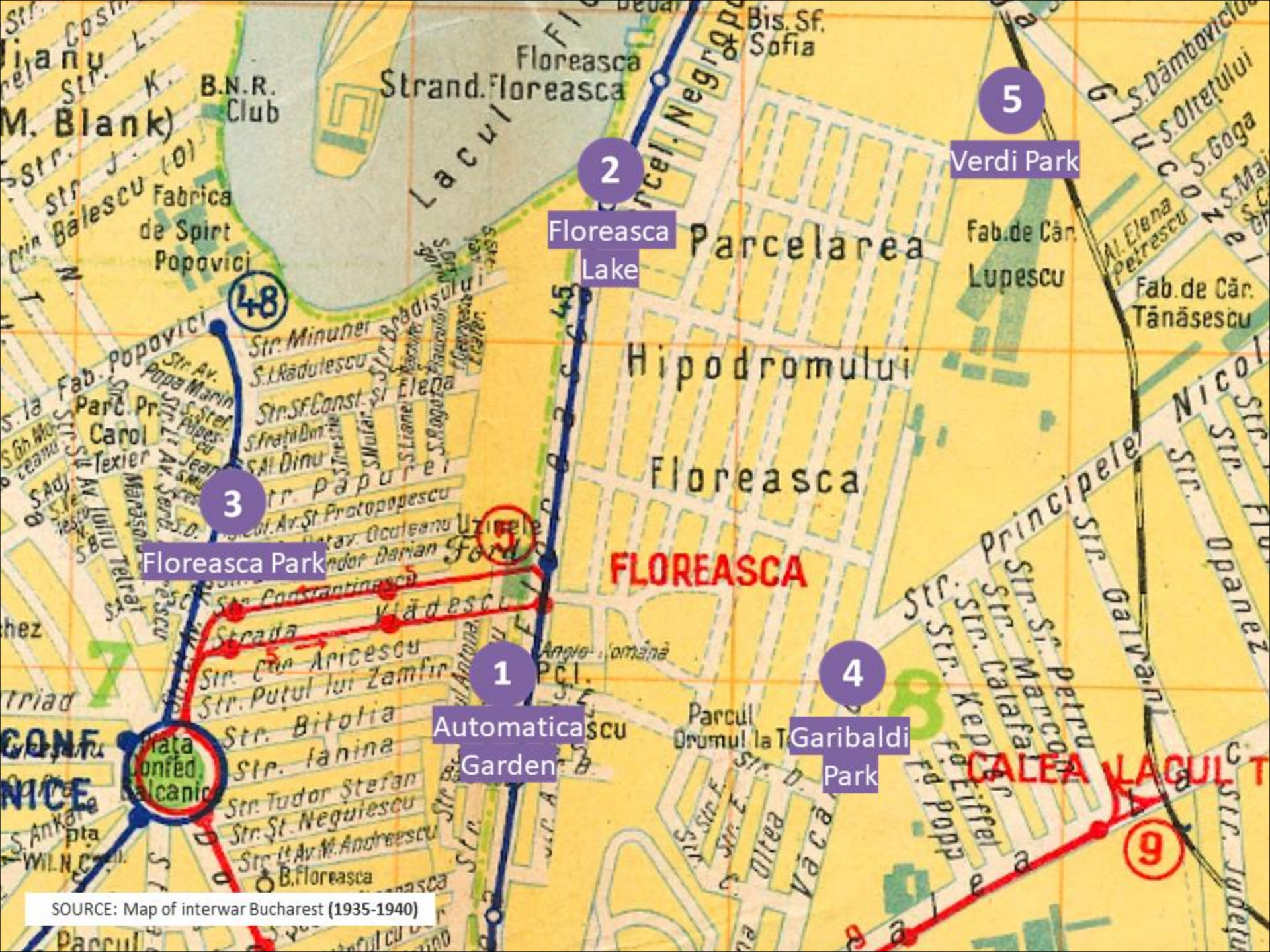
Introduction

Source: Ana Maria Zahariade - Architecture in the Communist Project. Romania 1944-1989

Floreasca Neighbourhood

From the city's old landfill and "a breeding ground for infection and disease" (Caranfil, 1936) to "one of the most attractive residential areas in present-day Bucharest" (Voinea, 2013).

“Pleasant and particularly comfortable living, even luxurious, despite [...] the fact that the apartments are minimal.” (Zahariade, 2009)


1
Automatica Garden
2
Floreasca Lake
3
Floreasca Park
4
Garibaldi Park
5
Verdi Park
FLOREASCA
Floreasca
Parcelarea
Hipodromului
B.N.R. Club
Strand. Floreasca
Fabrica de Spirt Popovici
Fab. de Căr. Lupescu
Fab. de Căr. Tănăsescu
Parcul Carol
Parcul Drumul la T.
CALEA VĂCĂREȘTI
Str. Putul lui Zamfir
Str. Bitolia
Str. Ianina
Str. Tudor Ștefan
Str. Șt. Negulescu
Str. Principele Nicol
Str. Galvani
Str. Opanez
Str. Calafat
Str. Kepler
Str. Eiffel
Str. Marconi
Str. Petru
Str. Ștefan
Str. Constantinescu
Str. Aricescu
Str. Minunei
Str. Brădișului
Str. Sf. Const. și Elena
Str. Păpurei
Str. Av. Popa Marin
Str. Av. Jean
Str. Av. Iuliu Telrat
Str. Av. M. Andreescu
Str. Av. Șt. Protopopescu
Str. Av. Oculeanu
Str. Av. Dorian
Str. Av. Șerb
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SOURCE: 1966, July 12 - The Corona (KH-4A) spy satellite program, U.S. Geological Survey, made available through fostulbucuresti.github.io

Materials and Methods

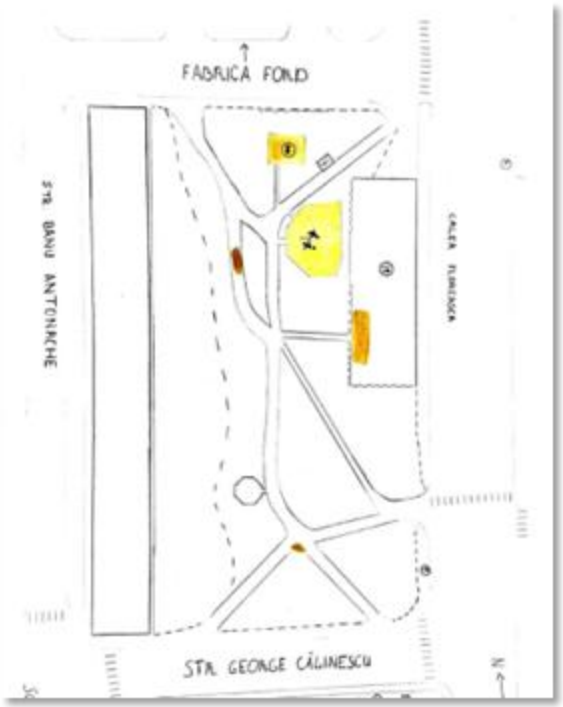
Used methods:

- The study of city plans, maps, books, documents, articles, and multimedia content
- Theoretical model comparisons
- Walking (Moles, 2008)
- Mapping (Wood, 2011)
- Non-Participative Observations - Counting, Looking for traces, and Photographing (Gehl & Svarre, 2013)
- The identification of nodes, paths, districts, landmarks, and edges (Lynch, 1960)
- Interviews with residents

Results and discussions

AUTOMATICA GARDEN

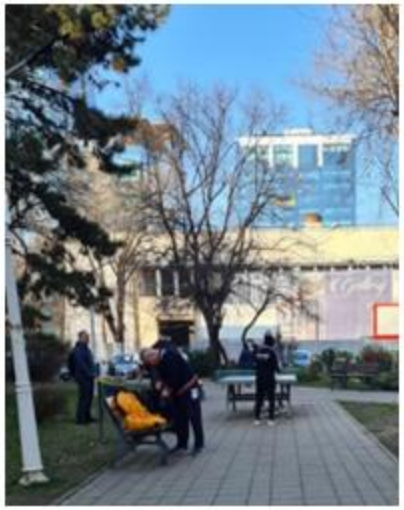
The Automatica Garden was created on land bought by Ford Română SAR in 1930s for their first factory in SE Europe, and later owned by the Automatica Enterprise.



SOURCES: Corona (KH-4A), KH-9 Hexagon, author drawings for 1966, 1980, present day

AUTOMATICA GARDEN

- In 1966 the pocket park had a modernist layout. In the 80s user experience generated a diagonal alley, that was included in the design
- New buildings were constructed on the garden's sides
- The space is an urban plaza attracting residents and visitors of the neighbourhood
- Its modernist style was lost through the years
- The Springtime restaurant has a positive and a negative impact



Results and discussions

FLOREASCA LAKE

After the lake reclamation projects in the 1930s, Floreasca Lake's shore was designed as a promenade. The authorities even envisioned it as a place for nautical sports.

SOURCES: Corona (KH-4A), KH-9 Hexagon), author drawings for 1938, 1980, present day

FLOREASCA LAKE

The photographs from the 1940s until the 1960s show how Floreasca Lake and the Floreasca Urban Beach were used: swimming, sunbathing, fishing, picnics, leisure strolls and skating during winters

SOURCE: Floreasca Lake 1960s, photo published by https://fb.com/TurismAltadata

Photos: Willy Prager

FLOREASCA LAKE

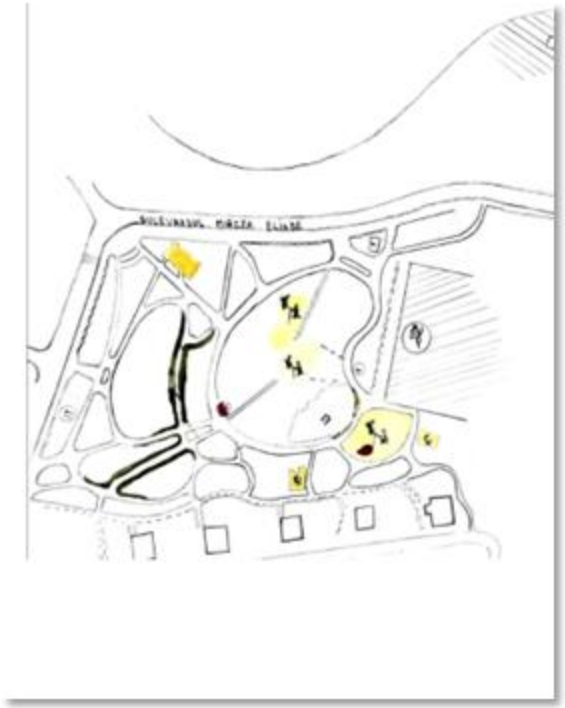
- At this time the lakefront promenade represents less than half of its original length.
- The failure of the project designed to develop the lakefront promenade and other amenities along the city's northern lakes left the promenade in neglect.
- Newly planted vegetation is still too young to contribute to the creation of a valuable atmosphere.

Photos: the authors

Results and discussions

FLOREASCA PARK

The park and the 6 towers of the new housing complex were built on top of the old Floreasca Pit in the 60s. The plans show a modernist park - curved pathways and a strong contrast between architecture and nature, specific for the modernist / international style.



SOURCES: Luftwaffe, KH-9 Hexagon, author drawings for 1938, 1976, present day

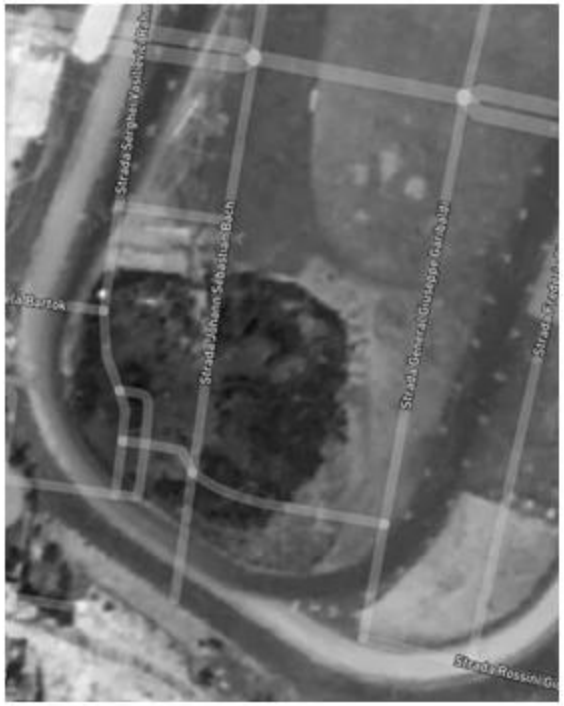
FLOREASCA PARK

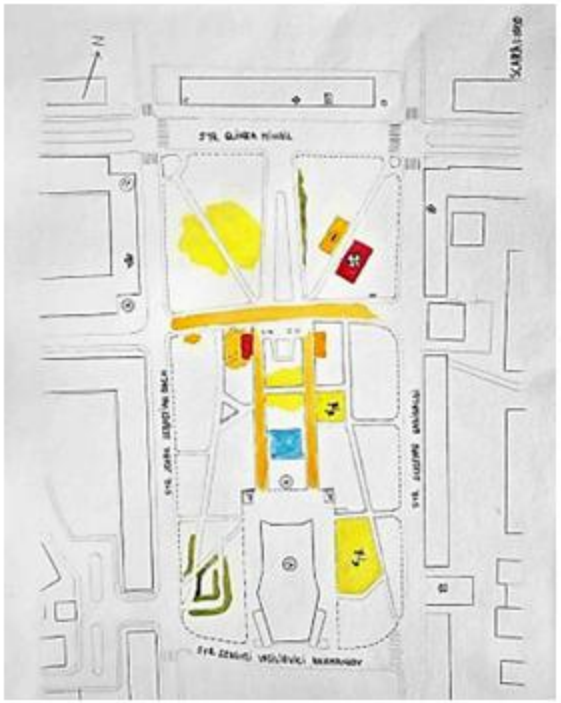
The park's original ambiance was emphasized by the ice rink, modernist art and design. The Stalinism meltdown (Zahariade, 2011) was in full swing.

Results and discussions

GARIBALDI PARK

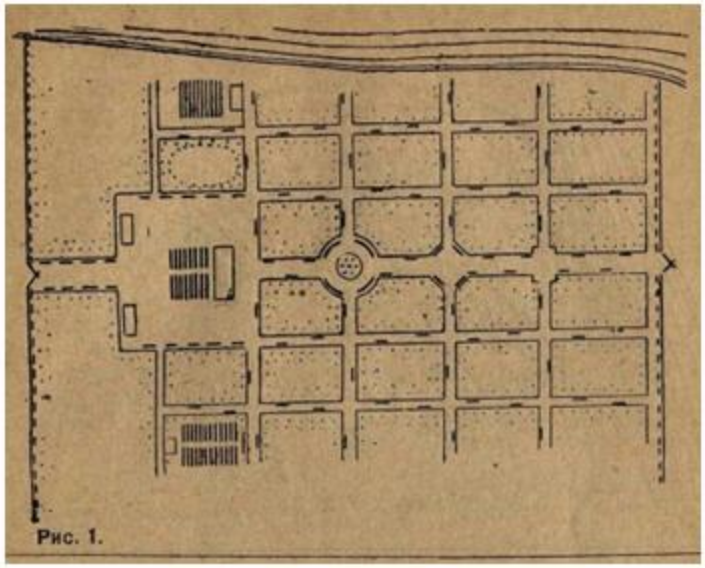
The Garibaldi Park was built around 1957 on top of the pit of former Lupescu brick factory that is shown on 1933 maps next to the former Floreasca Racecourse.





SOURCES: Luftwaffe, KH-9 Hexagon, author drawings for 1938, 1976, present day

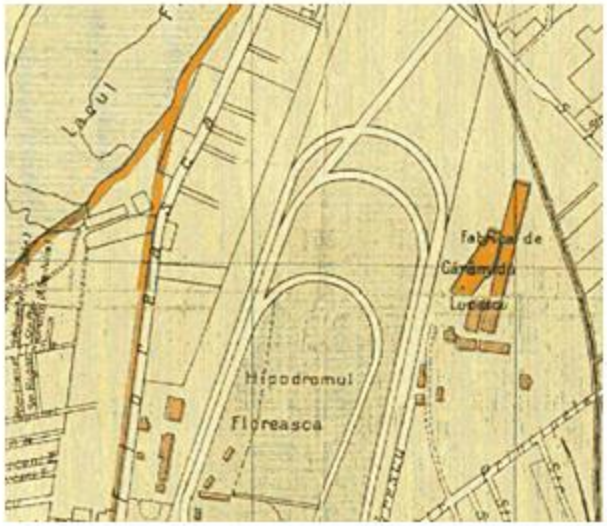
GARIBALDI PARK



SOURCE: Arhitectura RPR, no. 8/1955 – inital plan for the 1st phase of construction

- The Garibaldi Park was initially (1955) a mise-en-scene of a workers' club (Pîrvu, 2015)
- The plans of the park followed a geometric, Stalinist model, similar to other Soviet plans
- The park integrated modernist elements (cinema), but its vegetation was minimal

GARIBALDI PARK



- The neighbourhood's main community park
- There are age-specific hotspots (Wisteria vines - kids, central alley - seniors)
- The older residents are nostalgic about public events happening here
- Its style and atmosphere remained mostly the same, just slightly improved

Results and discussions

VERDI PARK

The southern limit of Verdi Park appears in the 1945 Plotting Plan of the former Floreasca Racecourse signed by the architect Duiliu Marcu, which may mean that the park was always intended to serve the residents of the neighbourhood.

SOURCES: Corona (KH4A), KH-9 Hexagon, author drawings for 1966, 1980, present day

VERDI PARK

- In the past 70 years, Verdi Park has lost some of its territory. Its area is now fragmented into numerous smaller plots.
- The fact that it has not been maintained or developed in the past 20 years has transformed it into a park with a wild and natural atmosphere, which many consider to be more valuable than its previous iteration with orderly tree alignments.

Photos: the authors

Conclusions and recommendations

- All parks have undergone changes over the years. The atmosphere in some parks has become more valuable, while in others it has deteriorated.

- The Automatica Garden has become an urban square that seems to have lost part of its identity – as it's not connected to the Ford Factory anymore and the factory itself is being changed by real estate investors. However, it remains a meeting place for ping-pong enthusiasts from both inside and outside the neighbourhood, as well as for food delivery people.

- Due to the illegal expansion of the old club, the shore of Floreasca Lake has also lost some of its once occupied territory. The residents of the neighbourhood have lost access to the lake as they knew it.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Floreasca Park has lost some of its vibrancy. The modernist concrete slide is closed. The ice rink no longer exists. The central meadow has been covered by a playground made of colorful plastic. Buildings are towering over it.

- The Stalinist, geometric style of the Garibaldi Park arrangement has faded over time, with each new alley and each new change made by the local administration. In its current iteration, the park is highly appreciated by residents.

- The tall buildings next to Verdi Park are ruining part of its wild atmosphere. They're disturbing through their height, and by making visitors feel as if they're trespassing - like the park belongs to those new buildings.

- The fact that the parks were built in different styles and offer different atmospheres is one of the things making Floreasca a great place to live.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accentuating the transformation of the Automatica Garden into an urban plaza with a well-defined social function - that of being a meeting place.
- Recovering the promenade on the shore of Lake Floreasca, as the presence of the lake contributes to the neighbourhood's quality of life and residents should have the freedom to use it.
- Highlighting the art and modernist design in Floreasca Park, to preserve the urban heritage of the neighbourhood and the park's identity.
- Creating minimal amenities and a management plan for Verdi Park while considering its current environmental value.
- Recovering and making good use of the Garibaldi Park cinema building. The park can become an even more important meeting place for the community.
- Preserving the diversity of park atmospheres available in the neighbourhood.

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Thank you!